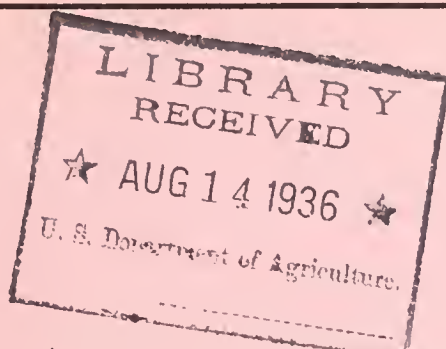


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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, July 8, 1936

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "GUARDIANS OF OUR MEAT SUPPLY." Information from the Bureau of Animal Industry, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Friends, how many of you know that Dr. E. C. Joss was recently made head of the Meat Inspection Service of the Bureau of Animal Industry in the United States Department of Agriculture? Not many, I wager, although his work directly affects every eater of meat.

The round purple stamp you see on pieces of meat is the Government inspection mark. But many a consumer will say, "What sort of inspection? I can see for myself that the meat is all right."

What the consumer doesn't "see for herself" is the rigid inspection of that meat before it arrives on the retail counter. Another thing that is seldom understood is that not all meat is Government inspected. Only meat that is handled in an establishment engaged in interstate or foreign business is required by law to be inspected and stamped. Because of that law, packing houses that ship even a part of their meat out of their own States are under Federal inspection. There is also some city and State meat inspection.

Let's suppose that a civic club program has been planned to include as speakers a Federal meat inspector, a city health commissioner, and a retail meat dealer. On the strength of a general invitation issued to anyone interested in this important subject we'll transport ourselves to the town hall and imagine we're listening to the speakers.

The Federal meat inspector is first. "We begin our work with the live animals," he explains. "They are examined and all that are sick, injured, or abnormal in any way, we mark with a metal identification tag affixed to the ear. If the condition is serious and the animal is condemned at once on this first inspection, it must not be taken to the slaughter room. If its condition is not serious or is doubtful it is tagged 'U. S. Suspect' and kept apart and slaughtered separately from the apparently healthy animals.

"Next comes the more important veterinary post-mortem inspection. Every part of each carcass receives a searching examination -- the head, the internal organs, glands, exposed bones, and the muscles. The great majority of animals are found to be healthy, but any carcasses that show signs of disease or abnormal conditions are marked. Inspectors are alert for signs of abnormal conditions, especially indications of tuberculosis and other diseases. Carcasses that are condemned as unfit for food are denatured and made into grease or fertilizer.



7/8/36

"Federal inspection also applies to the great variety of meat products put up in packages or cans. Lard, oleomargarine, hams; bacon, sausage, and potted and canned meats are typical inspected products. The purpose of the inspection of such products is to assure the use of clean wholesome meat products and other ingredients and truthful labels. Meat-inspection chemists test the purity of the water, spices, and other substances used in meat products, and also make examinations from time to time of the finished, labeled meat food before it is distributed to the trade."

A meat dealer has a question. "I'd like to know who makes all the regulations and rules concerning the way meat has to be handled and whether an animal should be passed for food."

"The Federal inspector has an answer all ready. "The regulations are authorized by the Federal meat inspection law of 1906 and later acts, and are issued by the Secretary of Agriculture. They embody the recommendations of scientists and hygienists outside the department as well as of those in the service. They are in printed form."

"What kind of marking fluid is used for the round U. S. inspected and passed stamp on the meat?" the dealer asks.

"That's a good question. The fluid used for marking meats is composed of approved, absolutely harmless ingredients. There's no reason for cutting the stamp off."

Here's a city attorney trying to ask a question. "Do you bring many prosecutions for violations of the Federal meat inspection law?"

"Very few, - due largely to a growing spirit of voluntary compliance, as well as the severe penalties. A very strict provision of the law also deters packers from attempting to influence the judgment of inspectors."

A city health commissioner is the next speaker. He says, "Inspection does not interfere with the business of persons handling clean, wholesome products, but it compels those who are dirty or dishonest to conform to a reasonable standard of conduct or turn to some other line of business not so closely related to public health and welfare."

A housewife wants to know how much meat inspection increases the cost of retail meat. "About one-fiftieth of a cent per pound -- probably not more than 4 cents a person a year."

A retail meat dealer has the floor. "Everything I handle has the Government inspection stamp or label on it," he says. "I used to work in an inspected packing house and I have also worked in the other kind. Generally there's a great contrast in conditions and methods. Human nature is much the same everywhere, and it's easier for an impartial, thorough inspector to condemn an unsound animal than for the owner to do so."

A farmer says, "Producers of livestock are working zealously to grow and market the best quality, the healthiest stock possible. Our producers' association welcomes competent inspection, whether it's Federal, State, or municipal."





7/8/36

"Another point: More than 90 percent of the veterinary inspectors in the Federal meat inspection service were farm raised. They may even be the sons or brothers of the very men who raised the meat they have to inspect and sometimes condemn. They must meet high ethical standards. They must also have had four years' preparation in an accredited veterinary college, and pass a rigid civil service examination."

Friends, our civic program is over. I hope it has given everyone who listened a new slant on an old subject -- providing wholesome meats. The "little purple stamp" or the printed statement of inspection represents a Government service for the protection of consumers, producers, and the meat trade.

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